Well, another year has been completed.  It’s amazing how quickly time flies by.  The SmartBoard has proven to be such an invaluable tool yet again.  I could teach without it, but I would not be as supportive to my students as I know I could with it.  I have many ELA students in my room so for them to have a visual explanation of what I am teaching is priceless.  Often they would ask me a vocabulary word and I could immediately put something on the screen to show them what I was talking about.  Or better yet, I would get them to do it.  I have two kids who were very excited to teach the class origami and they did.  Afterwards, we used YouTube to locate videos of step by step instructions of how to build other origami models and they loved it because they could follow along on screen while the lesson progressed.

Many of my ELA students and regular students were having difficulty with verb tenses and I used the SmartBoard all the time to do activities and lessons that they really enjoyed.  I had never had such success and interest when teaching grammar in the past.  They really loved it!

My goal this year was to be able to incorporate research along with handing in assignments electronically. I order to go about doing this I had to create opportunities for students to have fun. At one SmartBoard meeting we were told to turn up the heat when it came time to getting our students to do more inquiry based research.  On my class website I stressed more and more the need to be able to do proper and effective internet searches.  I posted a daily question which used to be a weekly question based around something that I taught in school that day.  At first there wasn’t much success because they were lazy.  As I showed them the answers the next morning on the SmartBoard they started to notice all the emails I was receiving from their peers and they wanted to get on board.  Soon I was having 75% of the class responding to my questions on a daily basis.  The next day I would always go over the answers and they could see how they did.  It got a bit competitive and they would be very happy with themselves if they researched the topic correctly. I also had them respond to me where they got their information from by pasting a copy of the link. This way they would get accustomed to referencing a source.

I was also able to effectively incorporate the SmartBoard in my Math group and a senior Phys. Ed. class that I taught.  Both classes always commented to me how they wished that they had a SmartBoard in their class too.  It was especially helpful in Math to prepare for the system wide diagnostic exam.  Instead of just handing out paper, they had a visual that they could follow along with due to the SmartBoard.  It proved to be a big success for reminding kids about their homework or getting an assignment handed in to me.  By the end of the year I can honestly say that I had only two kids who could not email me their assignments.  One of those students had just moved here from a different country and only spent about one month in my class.

Finally, the laptop has been very handy this year as well.  Whether it is checking the many, many emails that we now all seem to be getting or checking out the new curriculum guides that we are just getting to know.  Without the laptop I would be wasting more time running back and forth trying to find out information for myself.  The laptop allows me more time on task with my students.  Not only that but valuable time on task because if they have a question regarding something I can answer it immediately for them.  In essence, I am modeling for them how to do research and discover things for themselves.  It has been a great year and I look forward to working with the laptop and SmartBoard again. For the final year I would like to really get my students to be technologically savvy by becoming familiar with a few programs. I would like them to be proficient with Microsoft word, Google Earth and email. I will be using a novel study to implement these goals and a unit on communication. The reason that I have chosen this goal is because I noticed that my students from this year, although able to type, had little to no idea about how to format a proper document. Also, I am finding that the amount of email is indicative of how much we as humans are relying on technology. I want my students to not only use email to communicate with me but with others as well.